

Kansas Head Start Association Announces New Oral Health Grants

Kansas Head Start Association (KHSA) just announced that it has received two major grants to underwrite the creation of a network of children's oral health services, connecting early learning programs, safety net clinics, Extended Care Permit (ECP) hygienists and community dentists into a system across Kansas. Delta Dental of Kansas Foundation and United Methodist Healthy Ministry Fund have each awarded funds to develop the network. <http://ksheadstart.org/node/79>

This initiative supports a consistent effort by KHSA since 1999 to build a system of oral health services for children, birth to five. Research shows that the fastest rate of growth of decay in children is happening in the early years. Unfortunately, these children are most often not being seen in private dental offices, and if these children's dental services are funded by Medicaid or HealthWave, they are less likely to receive the early prevention services needed to remain cavity free.

To establish this network, KHSA and its partners will rely on existing safety-net clinics and dental hubs will support the development. In communities where there are no safety net dental clinics, ECP hygienists and Head Start programs will launch community-based services, linked to private dental offices.

The network of services will also link with Office of Oral Health's plans for children's oral health screening programs and oral health services for children with special health care needs.